DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 549 FL 026 248

AUTHOR Volk, Dinah; de Acosta, Martha
TITLE Sibling Support for Bilingual Kindergartners' Developing Literacy.
PUB DATE 2000-04-00
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education Programs; Churches; Clergy; Comparative Analysis; Educational Environment; English (Second Language); Family Environment; Hispanic American Students; *Interaction; Kindergarten; Kindergarten Children; Limited English Speaking; *Literacy; Primary Education; Puerto Ricans; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Siblings; *Sociocultural Patterns; Socioeconomic Influences; Spanish; Spanish Speaking

ABSTRACT

This article examines the literacy events of two Puerto Rican kindergartners and their interactions with siblings and cousins of similar age. This work is part of a broader study that analyzes and describes literacy events in bilingual classrooms, homes, and churches of Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican beginning readers. Using a qualitative approach, the study examined the children's interactions with print and with other people (teachers, pastors, parents, peers, siblings, extended family members). These events are analyzed for similarities and differences in the three settings. The main questions guiding this research are the following: Who are the teachers in the children's homes, churches, and classrooms? What do they believe about literacy and their role in the process? What literacy events do children participate in and what are the literacy practices of these events? What strategies for teaching and learning are co-constructed by the children and their teachers? In this study the strategies used by the children are compared with those of the teacher in the children's bilingual kindergarten. (KFT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 440 549

DRAFT

Sibling Support for Bilingual Kindergartners' Developing Literacy

Dinah Volk
Early Childhood Program
College of Education, RT 1328
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, OH 44115, USA
(216) 523-7101
(216) 687-5379
d.volk@csuohio.edu

Martha de Acosta
Urban Child Research Center
College of Urban Affairs, UB 224
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, OH 44115, USA
(216) 687-5490
(216) 687-5445
m.deacosta@csuohio.edu

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dinah Volk

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL026248

Paper presented as a part of a symposium entitled *Literacy Learning in and Out of School: Siblings and Peers as Teachers in Multilingual/Multicultural Communities in the U.S. and Britain* at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association; New Orleans, LA: April, 2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction: Questions and Conceptual Framework

In this article, we examine literacy events in which two Puerto Rican kindergartners interact with their siblings and with cousins of a similar age. This work is part of a broader study that describes and analyzes literacy events in the bilingual classroom, homes, and churches of three Spanish dominant, Puerto Rican kindergartners who are beginning readers. Using a qualitative approach, we investigate the children's interactions with print and with other people (Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984), whether they are a classroom teacher, Sunday school teacher, pastor, or a parent, peer, sibling, extended family member, or family friend. We analyze these events as well as the similarities and differences between and among them in the three settings, illuminating the complex literacy lives of the children.

The main question guiding our broader research study is: What counts as literacy in the bilingual classroom, homes, and churches of three Spanish dominant, Puerto Rican children? In particular, we ask: (1)Who are the teachers in the children's homes, churches, and classroom who support their literacy? (2)What do they believe about literacy and about their own role in the process? (3)What literacy events do the children participate in and /or observe and what are the characteristics of the literacy practices in these events? (4) What strategies for teaching and learning are co-constructed by the children and their teachers?

In this paper, we focus on two of the children in the study.[1] We assume that they are active constructors of literacy and analyze the literacy strategies they co-construct with their siblings within the context of the literacy beliefs of their families, the literacy events in which they participated, and the resources they used. We also compare the strategies used by the children with those used by the teacher in the target children's bilingual kindergarten. Our analysis of the data led us to move away from current assessments of match and mismatch between home and school and of continuities between the two sites to uncovering the ways the participants in literacy events combined various strategies creating new ways of interacting with print.

We employ a multilayered approach to understand how literacy is constructed in social and cultural practices (Bloome & Theodorou, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Gregory, 1998). In the implementation of this approach, we use ethnographic techniques to situate the literacy events in their context (outer layer), researching the immediate and wider social context of the literacy event, including the literacy histories, beliefs, and practices of the families and the children (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). We also use the techniques of the ethnography of communication to describe the components of the literacy event (middle layer) (Gregory, 1998). Finally, we use discourse analysis to uncover the structure of the communicative practices displayed in the literacy events (inner layer) (Santa Barbara Discourse Group, 1992). In this paper, findings are shared from the analysis of all three layers.

Our study draws from socio-cultural theory in seeing children's learning and development as embedded in a sociocultural process (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). We are attentive to how children as cultural novices experience appropriate patterns of thinking

[1] Manuel's parents reported that his older brothers assisted him with homework, but we were never able to interview them or to observe such interactions.

and communicating in interactions with experts, more competent members of their cultures, and to the ways in which children actively appropriate the community's tools and skills, remaking them for their own use. This concept of appropriation (Rogoff, 1990) or guided reinvention (Fisher & Bullock, 1984) illuminates both the active roles of the expert and novice as well as the creation of something new in the process of development rather than just the replication of the old.

What has been distinctive in our investigation of expert-novice interactions has been (1) the exploration of syncretism that emphasizes the creative blending of teaching strategies in all contexts, rather than the matches and mismatches or continuities and discontinuities between settings and (2) the expansion of the circle of attention beyond the mother and father as experts to older siblings or peers (Gregory, 1998; Volk, 1997) and a network of people that extends beyond the home and into the community (de Acosta, 1994).

Literacy. From this perspective, we focus on literacy as a social and cultural process (Baynham, 1995; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gregory, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 1995) rather than a cognitive one. We make the assumption that it is neither a natural process (Baker & Luke, 1991; Walton, 1993) nor an individual process (Kanter, Miller, & Fernie, 1992) nor a process that occurs in only one way but is a collaborative process that exists in multiple forms that vary within and across social and cultural settings (Luke & Kale, 1997; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Because of this variability, many researchers now refer to "literacies" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gregory, 2000; Street, 1999) "for no one definition can capture the range of occurrence in everyday life..., the multiplicity of demands, or the ways of engaging in literacy within and across groups" (Santa Barbara Discourse Group, 1992, p. 121).

The key question of our study on which we can peg all our other questions is, "What counts as literacy in the children's bilingual classroom, homes, and churches?" (Heap, 1991). Based on previous studies (Cairney, 1998; Gregory, 1996; McCollum, 1991) we expected to find both similarities and differences between and among the settings in relation to the literacy practices, participants' goals, and the meanings they ascribe to literacy. We became particularly interested in the syncretizing of literacy beliefs and of ways of interacting with print that participants had learned in Puerto Rico with those learned on the U.S. mainland, those learned in classrooms with those beliefs and ways of interacting learned at home and in churches. Previous research (Duranti & Ochs, 1996, Gregory, 1999; Luke & Kale, 1997, Volk, 1999) suggests that, particularly in cross-cultural contexts, the process of syncretizing is more than a blending but is a creation of something new and multifaceted.

The question about "what counts" also implies that certain literacies count or are valued more than others. Previous research (Street, 1999; Wagner, 1993) suggests that school-identified forms of literacy—ways of reading and writing practiced in school settings—are the valued forms in many industrialized societies and that other ways of interacting with print are often unknown to those involved in formal education or are disparaged as not useful or even counter-productive to the learning of reading.

The unit of analysis we use is the literacy event, "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretive processes"

(Heath, 1982, p. 93). Events are situated interactions, they happen in a specific context, and, thus, the concept of literacy event ties literacy to the context in which it develops (Barton & Hamilton, 1998).

Within literacy events, we analyze literacy practices, "the general cultural ways of utilising [sic] written language which people draw upon in their lives" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 6). Practices are "what people do with literacy" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 6) collaboratively as well as the ways in which people understand and value literacy. Thus, we describe literacy practices in the context of literacy events by indicating how their social construction draws from available discourses, who is participating in the literary events, the tasks that are being performed (interactions that support literacy), the material resources and the language (Spanish, English or a combination of both) employed in the situation, and the cultural values and immediate motives (when accessible) that underlie the literacy practices (Volk, 1997).

In this paper, the specific literacy practices we examine are the strategies for teaching and learning literacy that were co-constructed by the target children and their siblings. These strategies were grouped by the aspect of literacy being taught. These aspects included: (a) *concepts of print*: the fundamental knowledge that "print carries a message, that print represents the sounds in spoken language, and that English print has conventions...;" it also includes "...letter-name knowledge and phonemic awareness (the conscious awareness of the sounds in spoken words)" (Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, & Paris, 1998, Topic 2, p.1); (b) *word identification*: the ability to immediately recognize a familiar word as well as word analysis, the ability to use phonics—knowledge of specific letter-sound associations—to figure out unfamiliar words; (c) *comprehension*: the "awareness of the sources of information in text" (Vacca, Vacca, & Gove, 1991, p. 172); the ability to construct meaning from a text; (d) *fluency*: "the ability to identify words rapidly so that attention is directed at the meaning of the text" (Hiebert et al., 1998, Topic 4, p.2). In our study, we also included strategies that facilitated the development of children's oral language ability and their ability to write.

Families as resources. Our exploration of the context of the children's literacy at home and in the community was framed by a perspective in urban and economic anthropology that studies households as resource systems (Wallman, 1984). For the purposes of our study, resources were understood as those possessions that had the potential of leading to benefits for the child's literacy according to the child's adult caregivers. We were particularly interested in how the families accessed other people for support, what knowledge they had, and what use they made of neighborhood resources that could support their children's literacy. In education, the concept of funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1995) has been used to link a family's resources to the school, providing teachers with a way of developing curriculum based on the information they gather about family resources.

Latino families. Previous research provides some suggestions about the resources of Latino families and the literacy events in which Latino children might participate at home. Studies of Latino families, the majority Mexican-American, the majority working class or poor, suggest that people, both within the family and beyond it, are an important resource for family survival (Gonzalez et al., 1995). Education is highly valued (Carger, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Hidalgo, 1994) though there is wide variation in the ways and the frequency with which

Latino parents support their children's schoolwork. Some families provide ample support (Hidalgo, 1994; Volk, 1999) while others are reluctant or less confident of their abilities to act as "adjunct school teachers" (Valdes, 1996, p. 193). Many are unfamiliar with the expectation of many teachers in the U.S. that parents provide direct instruction in school related skills. Some work (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994) notes that most literacy activities in Latino homes are related to school homework. Others (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993) observe that, for parents, "the purpose of the early literacy activity—correct and precise word and letter recognition at the most literal and concrete level—is consistent with their own experiences" (p. 327).

Siblings. Older siblings play an important role in the care and education of younger children in most cultures (Cicirelli, 1995; Weisner, 1989; Weisner & Gallimore, 1977). They often assist in caregiving, though, typically, older siblings act *with* parents, not as substitutes for them (Volk, 1999). As more expert members of a culture, older siblings co-construct knowledge along with the younger ones. In this way, they act as cultural and linguistic mediators by introducing the younger child to unfamiliar ways of interacting with print, for example, in familiar contexts, syncretizing the familiar and the new in the process (Gregory, 1998; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1989).

While the literature on siblings argues against generalizations (Weisner, 1989), some conclusions can be drawn. Research on Latino families (Carger, 1996; Farver, 1993; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1988; Valdes, 1996; Volk, 1997, 1999) indicates that sibling caretaking and teaching are often a valued and obligatory aspect of family life. Raising children and educating them is a collaborative endeavor within a broadly defined, extended family that may include biological and non-biological relations. Because of their socialization, Latino siblings are described as skillful caretakers and educators whose interactions are similar to those of parents in some ways, and different in others.

Methods

The children we studied attended the same bilingual kindergarten. We initiated fieldwork in the kindergarten in the fall of the school year and conducted participant observations (weekly daylong visits to the classroom and to parent meetings and gatherings throughout the fall). We took field notes, collected related artifacts such as the teacher's letters to parents and the children's work, and devoted some time during each visit to assisting the teacher with the children. These visits served the inter-related purposes of getting to know the children, their families, and the teacher, identifying three focal children, and of locating literacy events within the flow of activities during the school day.

The children were selected in consultation with the teacher, using information collected from observations, a kindergarten developmental assessment conducted by the teacher in the fall, and an informal reading assessment that we conducted in January. We wanted to focus on children who were Spanish dominant, with no apparent social or learning difficulties. We looked for a mix of boys and girls as well as a mix of proficient and struggling readers. Our previous research (Volk, 1999) had suggested that older siblings might play a role in Puerto Rican children's learning at home, so we planned to include at least two children with older bothers or sisters. In addition, since this same work indicated that families belonging to Protestant

evangelical churches often engaged in home Bible reading with their children, we looked for at least one family from such a denomination. In the end, we selected and received consent from the families of three Spanish dominant children: two girls and one boy; one the most accomplished beginning reader in the class, one making average progress, and one struggling; all three with older siblings; all three from families belonging to Protestant churches, two of which were identified as evangelical. The data presented here on sibling interactions focus on the two girls: Julializ, the accomplished reader, who knew many words by sight and was learning to analyze unknown ones, and Fidelia, the struggling reader, who was just becoming aware of concepts of print and learning to identify letters and sounds.

Between January and July of that year, we observed and audiotaped in the classroom twice a month for the first four hours of the day when most of the literacy events occurred and in each home once a month for between two and four hours at a time.[2] We conducted observations in two of the children's churches and Sunday schools and collected interview data on the other church and Sunday School and on literacy events in other homes and community settings.

Informal reading assessments were conducted with the three children in January and June to learn more about both the children's literacy abilities and their understanding of the reading process. As part of this assessment, the children were asked to select a book and read it to us. We collected copies of their journals and other work and report cards as well as copies of the kindergarten developmental assessment that was developed by the district and administered in the fall and spring. Numerous informal interactions with the children that involved literacy also took place during the year.

In March we conducted interviews with the parents in which we worked with them to draw network maps detailing the people with whom the family interacted as well as when and how often these interactions occurred. We asked them to identify the people who interacted with the children, particularly in literacy-related interactions. In addition to joint activities, the network maps denote closeness/distance and the ages and dominant language of the network members. These maps helped us select literacy events in the homes and community for observation and taping during the subsequent months.

Toward the end of the data collection phase we conducted semi-structured interviews with the parents. Siblings and other relatives participated in some of these. Informal discussions during our visits to the homes helped us amplify our understanding of the parents' perspectives and provided opportunities for talking about literacy with the siblings and others. Informal interviews with the Sunday School teachers were conducted during our visits to their classrooms. During the interviews and conversations, we collected information on the participants' literacy histories, their theories of literacy development, their descriptions of how they support the children's emergent literacy, and the reasons that underlie that support.

The process of selecting and treating classroom data for analysis also began during the data collection process. In January through April we taped the entire three-hour morning and

[2] Two wireless transmitting systems, a small cassette tape recorder in the pocket of a vest worn by the child, and a larger stationary tape recorder were used in various combinations to tape the children, the teacher, and their speech partners.

about an hour of class time after lunch, time when most of the literacy teaching and learning occurred. During May and June, with the help of the teacher, we tracked several literacy sequences, series of literacy events over four or five days. Most began with the reading of a book to the whole group and continued with a variety of activities that extended the themes of the book and gave children practice with the literacy skills involved.

The focus was narrowed even more in the transcription process: we prepared tape guides for the transcriber so that, after February, she would transcribe only literacy events in the classroom and homes. Then, transcripts of both the observations and interviews were imported into NUDIST, a software package designed to facilitate data retrieval and analysis. We coded events in the transcripts, divided events into sequences bounded by an initiating question or directive and a culminating response, and then identified the teaching strategies used in each sequence. In this paper we narrowed the sections of the literacy events to be analyzed even further and focus only on those events where the target children interacted with their siblings.

The Contexts

The Community

The school and the homes we studied were located in two adjacent working class neighborhoods of a large midwestern city. Puerto Ricans have been coming to this city for work since just after World War II, when jobs in industry were abundant. The year of the study, 1998, Puerto Ricans represented about 7 percent of the public school district's enrollment. Almost 80 percent of the students in the district's bilingual program were Latino, the great majority Puerto Rican (1999, http).

Most of the Puerto Rican families concentrate in a few of the city's neighborhoods. The families in our study lived in two neighborhoods adjacent to the neighborhood with the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans. Both are characterized by one- and two-family dwellings. One has been the home of heavy industrial factories, many of them closed now. Both neighborhoods are predominantly white, one has 11 percent Latinos, the other 4 percent; of these the majority are Puerto Ricans. The educational level of the largest number of residents lies between "some high school" for one of the neighborhoods and "high school graduate" for the other. In the neighborhood where factories still operate, 35 percent of the residents are operators and laborers; in the other neighborhood, 32 percent are sales and clerical workers. Median household income was $12, 676 in one neighborhood and $23,197 in the other (1999, http).

Since coming to the city, the Puerto Ricans have been made it, to some extent, an extension of their home community (Hannerz, 1987). A large Catholic church as well as large and storefront Protestant churches with Spanish names, local supermarkets and Latino "bodegas" and bakeries, Spanish radio and TV stations have found a foothold in these neighborhoods. In many other ways, this city is not an extension of their home communities. It is cold and gray in winter; only parts of their families are here with them, sometimes only temporarily; English is required for navigating the city and for many jobs. Two of the families talked about a time when they would return to Puerto Rico where they would be closer to their families.

The families in our study attended Latino churches in the community. Two were evangelical, one of these Pentecostal. The third family attended a Methodist church, but we were

not able to learn more about its orientation. We visited the first two churches and their Sunday Schools. At both, all the members of the congregation appeared to be Latino and the services and classes were in Spanish.

Public recitation of memorized Bibles verses and psalms by the congregation and by individuals—both adults and children—as well as joint singing and prayer were significant parts of the services we observed. The Bible was the primary text used. Special events for children and/or activities for children integrated into the adult services were observed in both churches. All featured lessons linked to portions of Bible text with concrete, hands-on activities, many incorporating literacy as children read name tags, made cards, read the Bible, or followed the reading of others.

The Bilingual Kindergarten

Lucia Martin, the teacher, is a Puerto Rican who grew up in Puerto Rico and was educated there and on the U.S. mainland in Spanish and English. She is fluent in both languages. The year of the study she was in her seventh year of teaching. There were between 26 and 31 children in her all-day bilingual kindergarten; all native Spanish speakers with varying degrees of English proficiency. All were eligible for the free lunch provided for low-income families.

Classroom activities consisted of whole and small group lessons, independent work, and play with a range of materials. Almost all the activities involved the children actively in some way. Though many were directed by Mrs. Martin, there were some in which the children worked independently or in small groups with peers on assignments or in one of the room's learning centers. In those child-centered activities, the children often functioned as each other's teachers, sharing knowledge and skills and sometimes providing direct instruction.

In interviews, Mrs. Martin explained that she believed her students could be successful in school and that it was important for them to maintain and expand their Spanish as she introduced English. To achieve these goals, she created a comfortable but challenging atmosphere and organized concrete, active learning experiences to help children develop both languages. Most activities took place in Spanish while English was introduced in informal ways.

Mrs. Martin described her approach to literacy as "holistic" since she used "language that is meaningful that children understand" and "constructivist" since she believed that children construct knowledge for themselves. She also believed that most of the children in her class had had few literacy experiences at home and, therefore, needed experiences with meaningful text and an introduction to concepts of print as well as direct instruction and practice with letter names and sounds and letter-sound relationships. Sometimes letters and sounds were taught in isolation as when the whole group chanted the alphabet. At other times, concepts of print, comprehension, and word analysis strategies were integrated in the same activity. For example, a small group lesson in which Mrs. Martin planned to provide direct instruction in phonics might be based on a story she had read previously to the children. She might begin that specific lesson with a series of turns questioning the children's knowledge of letter names, then ask another question about letter sounds, and then clarify the meaning of the word, sometimes in English, sometimes in Spanish (de Acosta & Volk, forthcoming).

In many activities, Mrs. Martin taught the children not just how to figure out the word they were looking at but strategies for figuring out unknown words in general. She taught them to look at the pictures on the page and, more often, at the letters in the words. Mrs. Martin also introduced the children to simple consonant-vowel syllables in Spanish with which they could build words. This technique was grounded in the Cartilla Fonética (Phonics Primer) a booklet that uses the syllabic method, and, following the phonetic characteristics of the Spanish language, is used to teach reading through patterns of sounds in Puerto Rico. Mrs. Martin felt that the Cartilla Fonética helped children read a limited list of words quickly and was not helpful for figuring out unknown words.

Books, poems and chants, thematic units, and journals were used to provide meaningful contexts for listening, talking, reading, and writing. Overall, Mrs. Martin wanted the children to develop "a good sense of what reading is about" and "that they can learn things out of looking at books." She wanted them to learn "[t]hat there is a story there and that there's words that tell the story; the pictures tell the story, that they can make a story too."

When Mrs. Martin was teaching the children during literacy events, she used what has been characterized in the literature as *teacher talk* (Volk, 1997). Sequences usually began with a directive or question assessing the children's knowledge and their correct responses were followed by a confirmation such as "mhm" or evaluation such as "muy bien" ["very good"]. Incorrect responses were rarely followed by "no." More often, Mrs. Martin provided cues to the right answer or modelled the right way to combine letter sounds to form a word, for example.

She often checked to make sure they understood what they were reading. Notably, literacy instruction was often interwoven with directions about appropriate reader behaviors. Children were constantly reminded to look at the letters and words, follow the text with their fingers, and listen to the sounds with their ears.

Mrs. Martin often expressed her frustration with Latino parents and what she described as their tendency to turn their children over to a teacher to be educated. "My parents don't listen when I tell them that reading every night makes a difference," she said. To one mother who did work with her child at home she commented, "Your child can almost read. You must be reading at home with him." When the mother noted that she tried to help, Mrs. Martin said, "That's good. It really makes a difference. I try to tell them how important it is to reinforce at home what I do but some act like I'm crazy." Mrs. Martin felt that she would have to provide the children with the literacy experiences they needed in school.

The Homes

The Families

The participants. The family networks extended beyond the boundaries of the nuclear family. A divorced mother, Sra. Torres, with her three children, two boys (9 and 12 years old) and a girl in our study (Julializ, 5 years old) lived in one home. A 21-year-old brother was away at college. A couple from their church—referred to by the mother as a "hermano y hermana de la iglesia" ["church brother and a sister"]--also lived in the home and came and went as part of the family. Another church brother, a young man from the neighborhood visited frequently, often helping the older brothers with homework. Sra. Torres received AFDC funds and earned a few

extra dollars by caring for children in her home. Her married brother and his wife—who had 3- and 7-year-old daughters— were very close and all three shared in the care of all three daughters. Sra. Torres had graduated from high school in Puerto Rico. She and her family had lived in the city for nine years. Previously, when her ex-husband was in the army, they had lived in places where he had been stationed, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. mainland and Europe.

In the other household a couple, Sr. and Sra. Ugarte, the uncle and aunt of the girl in our study (Fidelia, 5 years old), and their 7-year-old adopted daughter, their niece, lived together. The child in our study was the daughter of the Sra. Ugarte's brother and he visited the child frequently. Fidelia's mother and two siblings lived in Puerto Rico. Fidelia's aunt and uncle (to whom Fidelia referred as mother and father) both worked in small, local factories. Relatives from out of state, the uncle's brother and his wife with their 1-and 3-year-old sons, had been living in the house for several months and later the man's father came to stay for a while. Both Sr. and Sra. Ugarte had graduated from high school in Puerto Rico. They had lived in the city nine years and before that had lived in New York and in Puerto Rico. Fidelia had lived with them for three years.

Both families spoke primarily Spanish at home. The two children in the study were learning English and spoke it occasionally at school, with siblings, and with neighborhood friends. Julializ spoke the most English of the three and often worked at reading in English as well as Spanish. Fidelia explained that she knew more English than her aunt and told about translating for her with a shop keeper.

The sibling teachers who will be in focus of this paper include Julializ's 9- and 12-year-old brothers, Francisco and Fernando, and her 7-year-old cousin, Zoila and Fidelia's 7-year-old cousin, Felicidad, who she often referred to as her sister. While Zoila and Felicidad are not considered sisters within the North American cultural context, in that they are not also the daughters of Julializ's and Fidelia's parents, we decided to include them in this category of sibling teachers for several reasons. First, they were being raised by the same people in the same homes. Literacy events in which they participated together occurred on almost a daily basis. Second, like other Latino families described in the literature (Volk, 1999), the families' definitions of family and of brother and sister seemed broader than those based on nuclear families and specific blood relationships.

Families' literacy beliefs. To the parents, reading meant knowing letters and writing meant writing letters. This understanding of reading and writing was informed by how they had learned to read in Puerto Rico in the early primary grades. (None had attended kindergarten.) Almost all talked about learning to read with the Cartilla Fonética. Julializ's mother noted that she had used it to teach her sons and Julializ; her brother had borrowed her copy to work with his daughters and she wanted to get it back.

When asked about their children's education and their role in the process, parents described how they responded to their children's questions such as "Mami what does it say here?" and "How do you write this?" They said they checked backpacks for homework and helped the children complete tasks such as practicing writing the vowels. For Fidelia's aunt and uncle, an important part of their role was getting the children to school on time, clean, and well

fed. Fidelia's uncle credited his father with supporting his learning by insisting that he go to school every day. Julializ's mother spoke about teaching their children letters and numbers, addresses and phone numbers, and how to write their names. They mentioned reading to their children and getting library books. Julializ's mother described workbooks she had purchased at the store. Fidelia's aunt was less secure as a teacher of basic school information. For example, when Fidelia asked her aunt to help her identify some shapes, the aunt was unsure about the rectangle, noting that it was hard to remember information learned in school long ago. All the parents mentioned enjoying aspects of school and of learning to read. Fidelia's aunt noted that her mother had saved all her children's school papers.

For these parents, the idea of education had a strong Christian component. They all strove to provide a Christian education for their children which would, in Fidelia's uncle's words, "...dirigirlos por el buen camino" ["...guide them on the good road"]. First of all, this meant attending church and Sunday school. For Julializ's mother, educating her children also meant studying the Bible at home. Several times a week, family members sat together with their own Bibles, taking turns reading aloud. Sometimes, the adults read to the children; at other times, the adults scaffolded the children's reading when they were familiar with the texts. Occasionally, parents asked questions about the meaning of what had been read and children answered with previously-learned responses, rather than their own interpretations or ideas based on their experiences. The Bible was understood to be the Word of God, and reading the text was done with God's assistance after thanking Him for His help.

Literacy Events and Teaching Strategies

Literacy events were embedded in the daily life of the families. Often these events took place in the kitchen or living room, with two or more people participating in the event while the room was abuzz with other activities—people playing Nintendo, reading the paper, doing homework, watching television, cooking, talking, and babysitting to name a few. Although, on occasion, the children interacted with print by themselves, most of the time they did so with others, both young and old.

After school, the mothers often checked the materials the children brought home, reviewing what had been learned and helping children with homework, often working with them and other family members. The children also colored in coloring books, looked at storybooks, wrote what they had learned in school such as their names or the vowels, and looked at the Bible. All three mothers reported that their children liked to read books and that they worked to sound out words and look for meaning using the pictures and their emerging awareness of print. When not participating in literacy events, the children ate, took baths, watched television, played inside with toys, or played outside with bikes or balls. They played with siblings or cousins and with children in the neighborhood.

In Julializ's home. Julializ had a junior computer with learning games, some storybooks of her own, and some books from the library. At times, she worked at reading the books herself. At other times, often at bedtime, her mother read to her. Her uncle read to her and her cousin together when she visited their house. Julializ's mother also read the Bible with her, and sometimes with her brothers, every day. Sra. Torres had purchased a set of workbooks for

Julializ at the grocery store and Julializ often completed pages in these workbooks with her mother's assistance.

Literacy events were embedded as well in interactions with Francisco, 9, Fernando, 12, and with her cousin, Zoila, who was 7. The older brothers helped Julializ with homework or worked on it with her and her mother. They also helped her read her books or work in the workbooks. Zoila helped with school-related work but, more often, the literacy events they constructed were a part of play activities such as playing school or church or playing Nintendo.

As shown in Table 1, there were differences among the kinds of literacy strategies Julializ constructed with Francisco, with Fernando, and with Zoila. Julializ and Francisco primarily used literacy strategies that aimed at developing concepts of print, the fundamental knowledge about the nature of print and its relationship to spoken language. With Fernando, she constructed strategies related to concepts of print, word identification, and comprehension which concerns the meaning of words. And with Zoila, Julializ focused on word identification, using knowledge of letter-sound relationships to figure out words. There was little evidence in these events of strategies related to developing fluency, oral language abilities, or writing. The data in Table 2 suggests that concepts of print, word identification, and comprehension were sometimes used in combination.

Table 1
Strategies used by target children and siblings[1]

Strategies	Siblings							
	Felicidad		Fernando		Francisco		Zoila	
	N	%[2]	N	%	N	%	N	%
Concepts of print	22	52.38	26	20.31	33	67.35	5	11.90
Word ID/analysis	5	11.90	67	52.34			29	69.05
Comprehension	3	7.14	34	26.56	10	20.41		
Oral language experiences	6	14.29	---	---	1	2.04	7	16.67
Writing	5	11.90	1	.78	5	10.20	1	2.38
Total	41		128		49		42	

Note: [1]These literacy strategies were used by the children both when working as a pair and with other family members assisting.
[2] Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 2:
Strategies used by Julializ and Fidelia in literacy events with siblings

Strategies[1]	Target Children				
	Fidelia		Julializ		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
1	6	30.00	37	25.87	43
2	1	5.00	43		44
3			10	6.99	10
4	1	5.00	7	4.90	8
5			2	1.40	2
1&2			10	6.99	10
1&3	2	10.00	3	2.10	5
1&4	3	15.00	2	1.40	5
1&5	2	10.00	2	1.40	4
2&3			17	11.89	17
2&4	1	5.00			1
2&5	2	10.00	2	1.40	4
3&5			1	0.70	1
1,2,&3			6	4.20	6
1,2,&5	1	5.00			1
1,2,3,&5			1	0.70	1
1,2,4,&5	1	5.00			1
Total	20		143		163

[1] 1=concepts of print 2=word ID/analysis 3=comprehension
4=oral language experiences 5=writing

In Excerpt #1 below comes from a much longer event in which Francisco (FT) helps Julializ (JU) read passages in one of her workbooks. They proceed word by word, with Francisco saying each word, Julializ repeating it, and Francisco moving on to the next word without responding to what she has said. Thus, Julializ learns an important concept of print: that each spoken word is represented by a combination of letters on the page. She and Francisco pay no attention to the way the individual letter sounds come together in words and to the meaning of what they are reading. However, note that in lines 4 and 16 Sra. Torres (MT) prompts her son in what she believes are more appropriate teaching strategies. She tells him to attend to Julializ's comprehension of the passages, go more slowly, and allow Julializ to do as much as she can by herself.

Excerpt #1

1) FT: Quieres que yo te lea? O //tú//?
2) JU: //One.//
3) FT: One day a pig and a dog met a frog //on a log.//
4) MT: //Pero papi suave.// [But slowly dear.]

5) JU: One.
6) FT: Day.
7) JU: Day.
8) FT: A.
9) JU: A.
10) FT: Dog. I mean a fro-I mean a pig.
11) JU: A pig.
12) FT: And a dog.
13) JU: And a dog.
14) FT: Met.
15) JU: Mmmat.
16) MT: Enséñale la palabra nene, si no, no aprende. [Teach her the word boy, if not, she doesn't learn.]
17) FT: Dog. I mean frog.
18) JU: Frog.
19) FT: On a log.
20) JU: On a log.
21) FT: Hello Mr. Frog said the dog.
22) JU: Hello Mr. Frog said the dog.

The event continues as Julializ fills in some blanks on the workbook page with words they have read. Sra. Torres points out the title of the story and when Fernando says that she can't spell it, the mother tells him that Julializ will write what she knows. Then, in line 24, she asks Julializ directly if she has understood the story, modeling this comprehension strategy for Francisco. He follows with a comprehension question of his own and, as they continue, responds evaluatively to her turns in turns 28, 30, and 32.

23) JU: ((writes, talks to self)) Are. //You.//
24) MT: Mami //tú entiendes// la historia? [Dear do you understand the story?]
25) JU: Yes.
26) FT: All right. Espera! Espera! Primero antes que tú escribas. Qué era la historia aquí? [Wait. Wait. First before you write. What was the story here?]
27) JU: Um de un pig, de un dog, de un frog, de un...rock. [About a pig, about a dog, about a frog, about a...rock.]
28) FT: No.
29) JU: Log, de un. [Log, about a.]
30) FT: Mmm.
31) JU: Frog, de un. [Frog, about a.]
32) FT: The story was about them too.
33) JU: Them too.

At this point, the children's uncle arrives and Francisco leaves, saying he has to study for the proficiency test tomorrow.

Excerpt #2 comes from a long literacy event that begins when Julializ brings down from her room some workbooks and picture books in English that her mother has purchased for her. She reads several pages in one of the workbooks with her mother's assistance. As she starts to read the picture book, her 12-year-old brother, Fernando (FE), joins her. In contrast to Julializ's interactions with Francisco, those with Fernando combine literacy strategies and include a focus on word identification—he helps her analyze the sounds in a word in turn 3—and comprehension—he provides Spanish translations of the English words on the page and directs her attention to the picture in turn 35. Unlike Francisco who just provides Julializ with each word, Fernando, as in turn 5, responds contingently to her incorrect effort to read a word first and then provides the correct one. Throughout, he confirms or disconfirms what she says. In turns 8 and 30, Julializ reads several words together on her own.

Excerpt #2

1)	JU:	Zoo.
2)	MT:	Mjum. [Mhum.]
3)	FE:	Recuerda la W (English letter name) hace "wh". [Remember the W says "wh."]
4)	JU:	Wa.
5)	FE:	Mhmh. No. We.
6)	JU:	We. //Are.//
7)	FE:	//Went.// Went.
8)	JU:	Went. To. The. Zoo.
9)	MT:	Mjum. [Mhum.]
10)	JU:	It. Whhhas.
11)	FE:	Mjum. [Mhum.]
12)	JU:	¿Aquí? [Here?]
13)	FE:	((nods "yes"))
14)	JU:	A.
15)	FE:	Grande. [Big.]
16)	JU:	Big. Park. Www//www//.
17)	FE:	//Dilo.// [Say it.]
18)	JU:	Went. //When.//
19)	FE:	//With.// With.
20)	JU:	With.
21)	FE:	Mucha. [A lot.]
22)	JU:	A lot.
23)	FE:	Mjum. [Mhum.]
24)	JU:	Animals.
25)	FE:	Mhmh. Of.
26)	JU:	Of.
27)	FE:	Diferente. En inglés. [Different. In English.]
28)	JU:	Different animals.
29)	FE:	Mjum. [Mhum.]
30)	JU:	Zoo animals.
31)	FE:	((turns page))
32)	JU:	Lo pasaste uno. No. [You skipped one. No.] The lllions wwwear.

33) FE: Mhmh. Cubs.
34) JU: ¿Qué? [What?]
35) FE: ((points to picture)) ¿Qué son estos? [What are those?]
36) FE: Cubs.
37) JU: Cubs. Wa ww whhent.
38) FE: Were.
39) JU: Wear.
40) FE: Mjum. [Mhum.] Were.
41) FE: Jugando. [Playing.]
42) JU: Playing.
43) FE: Juego. [Game.]
44) JU: Game.

This event continues for at least half an hour. When it is over, the researcher present asks Fernando where he has learned to do what he has just done. He replies that he learned from Mrs. Martin when he was in her kindergarten class.

Excerpt #3 took place in June of the year of the study during the interview with Sra. Torres. The researchers sit with her in the living room and while they talk, Julializ' s cousin, Zoila (ZO), who has just completed first grade, helps Julializ read a list of words in English provided by Mrs. Martin to learn during the summer. The researchers ask the girls to continue for the tape recorder. Note the way that Zoila and Julializ move between Spanish and English with Zoila providing Julializ with phonic cues to the vowel sounds in English that make it possible for her to analyze the words successfully. In turns 5, 13, 15, and 24, Zoila models the combining of letter sounds which Julializ appropriates in turns 10, 12, and 38. Twice, in turns 3 and 35, Zoila responds to Julializ's turns with "no," more often she provides more word analysis information and, once, in turn 37, she repeats Julializ's assertion of her own competence.

Excerpt #3

1) ZO: La I (Eng letter name) es I (short I, Eng). [The I is I.]
2) JU: D. //D.//
3) ZO: //No// B.
4) JU: Bbbb.
5) ZO: Iiiigggg.
6) JU: Big. Little.
7) ZO: La O (Eng letter name) es U (short U, Eng). [The O is U.]
8) JU: To. Go.
9) ZO: P. A. (long A, Eng) //P.//
10) JU: //P//lay.
11) ZO: La O (Eng letter name) es. A (short O, Eng). [The O is. A.]
12) JU: Nnnn ot. Not.
13) ZO: U. I-U. (short U, I, Eng) Ruuuuuun.
14) JU: Run.
15) ZO: Oo. Ll ook.
16) JU: Look.
17) ZO: A. (short A, Eng)

18) JU: At. Me.
19) ZO: Y (long E, Eng). U (short U, Eng).
20) JU: You.
21) JU: A (long A, Eng). A (short U, Eng).
22) ZO: A A (short A, Eng).
23) JU: A (short A, Eng).
24) ZO: H A L P.
25) JU: Help.
26) ZO: La E. La E is (long E, Eng). //( )// [The E. The E is.]
27) JU: //Yo sé.// Yo sé todas esas partes. [I know. I know all these parts.]
28) JU: ¿Qué? ¿Aquí? [What? Here?]
29) ZO: Aja. [Aha.]
30) JU: Me. //Wh//e.
31) ZO: //Wh.//Wh-ere.
32) JU: Where.
33) ZO: I. (short I, Eng)
34) JU: It.
35) ZO: No.
36) JU: Is. Is.
37) ZO: Tú sabes todo esas partes. [You know all these parts.]
38) JU: I (short I, Eng). T. It. It. Aaa on.
39) ZO: No wh.
40) JU: One two three red blue yellow.
41) ZO: //Gr.//
42) JU: //Yo sé.// Yo sé. [I know. I know.] Green. Green. Orange.

In Excerpt #4, Julializ, Zoila, and Zoila's 3-year-old sister, Hilary, play church. As the excerpt starts, the research assistant (ZZ) is watching along with Sra. Torres, who is taking care of several young children. Julializ's 9 year old brother, Francisco, joins the play. At first, Zoila and Julializ look for a microphone and enough Bibles so everyone can have one. Zoila notes that she cannot read Spanish (the Bibles are in Spanish) but Julializ can. They spend some time getting organized.

In contrast to the excerpts above, no direct instruction in literacy occurs here. The children refer to the Bible text and Julializ recites a memorized prayer in turn 29 and reads a portion of the text she has memorized in turn 43. Like her teacher, Julializ instructs the younger Hilary in the appropriate behaviors to use when praying and reading the Bible.

Excerpt #4

1) JU: Ok. Vamos a orar, primero. Vamos a orar. [Ok. Let's pray, first. Let's pray.]
2) ((ZO and FT talk in background))
3) JU: Vamos a orar primero. Mira deja la biblia quieta! [Let's pray first. Look leave your Bible still!]
4) MT: ( ) chiquita ( ). No Julializ. Eso no se hace. [( ) little Bible( ). No Julializ you don't do that.]

5) JU: ((tó self)) So?
6) MT: ((to child she is caring for)) Come over here.
7) ZO: ( ).
8) FT: What is?
9) ZO: Fifty one.
10) JU: Fifty one.
11) MT: //(Vente).// [Come here.]
12) JU: // ( )// que alabar a Jehová. [( ) to praise Jehovah.]
13) ZO: //Ay dónde ( )// [Hey where ( ).]
14) MT: //Ese// es el ciento diecisiete mami. One one seven. [That's the one hundred seventeen dear. One one seven.]
15) ZO: One one //( )//.
16) JU: //So// pero pretend. Pero. [So but pretend. But.]
17) FT: Here I'll show you.
18) JU: Pretending that's it, ok?
19) FT: That's a one ( ).
20) JU: Ok. Hoy voy a predicar primero. Ok. ( ) orar. [Ok. Today I'm going to preach first. Ok. ( ) pray.]
21) ZO: Ok! I'm waiting.
22) JU: Y tus ojos? Tienen que estar cerrados. Tienen que estar cerrados, he-lo-o! [And your eyes? They have to be shut. They have to be shut, he-lo-o!]
23) ZO: ((laughs))
24) ZZ: Are you almost done?
25) JU: No!
26) ZZ: Ok, so start.
27) JU: This little girl ( ). Hilary! Cierre los ojos! Ok. Alaba-. ((sighs)) Ow! ((sighs)) Señor gracias. Se-. ((children laugh)). Gracias //Señor.// [This little girl ( ). Hilary! Shut your eyes. Ok. Prai-. Ow! Lord thank you. Lo-. Thank you Lord.]
28) ZO: //( ).//
29) JU: Ok. Señor, gracias Señor por todas esto que tú nos has dado. Cuida toda la gente Señor amén gracias Señor. [Ok. Lord, thank you Lord for all this that you have given us. Take care of all the people Lord amen thank you Lord.]
30) ZO: //That's all?//
31) JU: //Ok// el salmo. ((looks through Bible)) Diecisiete. No. Uno uno siete, ok? Ya lo cogió ok? [Ok the psalm. Seventeen. No. One one seven, ok? You already have it ok?]
32) ZO: One one seven.
33) JU: One one seven.
34) FT: Corintio what? [Corinthians what?]
35) ZO: One one seven.
36) JU: But that's ok. ( ).
37) FT: One one seven.

38) JU: Cuan-cuando usted terminen digan amén. [Whe-when you finish say amen.]
39) FT: I can say ( ).
40) JU: Yes you are. Little midget.
41) FT: Make me.
42) ZO: //Make him ( )//
43) JU: //Ok//((holds Bible)) alabar a Jehová naciones todas pueblos todos alabarle. Porque ha engrandecido sobre nosotros su semiricordia (sic) y la felidad (sic) de Jehova es para siempre aleluya amén.[Ok praise Jehovah all the nations all people praise you. Because you have exalted over us your empassion (sic)and the faifulness (sic) of Jehovah is for always halleluyah amen.]
44) ZZ: Wow! Was that there?
45) FT: Yup. She memorizes.
46) JU: Ya escribí "alabar a Jehova." Ok. [I just wrote "praise Jehovah."]
47) ZZ: Wow!
48) JU: Ok, ahora vamos a-cómo se llama otra vez? A cantar. [Ok, nowlet's-what's it called again? Sing.]

The service/play continues. Julializ sings a song and then she and her cousin sing several more. At one point they sing a song by the Tejana singer Selena. Sra. Torres comes from the kitchen and notes to the research assistant that the girls had just moved from church to songs by "una mujer del mundo" ["a woman of the world."] She is not pleased, though she smiles a bit. The girls continue with the service. Julializ prays "Yo quiero estar con Dios." ["I want to be with God."] She announces the collection and her brother protests.

In Fidelia's home. Like Julializ's mother, Fidelia's aunt checked her backpack for homework when she got home. However, she appeared to do this less frequently than Julializ's mother, sometimes helping Fidelia do homework such as writing the vowels and, at other times, not checking at all. In their home, there were a few children's books, some in Fidelia's room and one lost in the basement. A large armoire in the dining room held toys, a few old school books, and writing materials. Fidelia liked to look at the pictures in the books and, on occasion, her uncle read them to her. Once, during an observation, he read Fidelia two books. As he read, he translated the story in English into Spanish and Fidelia listened with rapt attention, requesting a second and then another book. Afterward, she explained to the research assistant that her uncle also recited a poem to her at bedtime; if he were not able to do so, she said it to herself, and she then proceeded to recite it for the research assistant.

Fidelia enjoyed reciting poems and songs, some she learned in school, some she learned from Felicidad, and some she made up. Often parts of songs were combined. Once, practicing the alphabet with Felicidad, she broke into the ABC song. Soon it became, "A B C N G O" as she mixed in the letters from the song "Bingo."

Fidelia's cousin, Felicidad, just a year older and struggling in school, often showed Fidelia her homework and gave Fidelia instructions for completing hers. During these literacy events, she sometimes addressed Fidelia as "Nena" ["Girl"] or "Mi'ja" ["My daughter"] as an

older person might a younger one. In the following excerpt, Fidelia (FI) practices writing the vowels, a homework assignment she had completed a few days previously. Her mother, Sra. Ugarte (FU), asked her to do it again and Felicidad (FE) helped. One of the researchers (DV) was also present.

This excerpt represents a common pattern in the literacy events constructed with Felicidad. The girls often practiced the alphabet and vowels using strategies for teaching concepts of print. They named the letters and made their sounds (Table 1). These concepts of print strategies were usually used singly, only occasionally in combination with comprehension, oral recitation, or writing strategies (Table 2).

In these interactions as she does below, Felicidad might provide a cue to the letter sound as she does in line 20. More often, she provides the correct answer as she does in lines 7 and 8 or responds with "no" when Fidelia makes a mistake and then provides the correct response, as she does in line 15. Fidelia sometimes accepts these corrections; at other times she exclaims "Yo se!" ["I know!"] as in line 7 or "Deja que yo diga!" ["Let me say it!"] at another time. Typically, these interactions with direct teaching by Felicidad were interspersed with the girls working together as peers and competing as siblings.

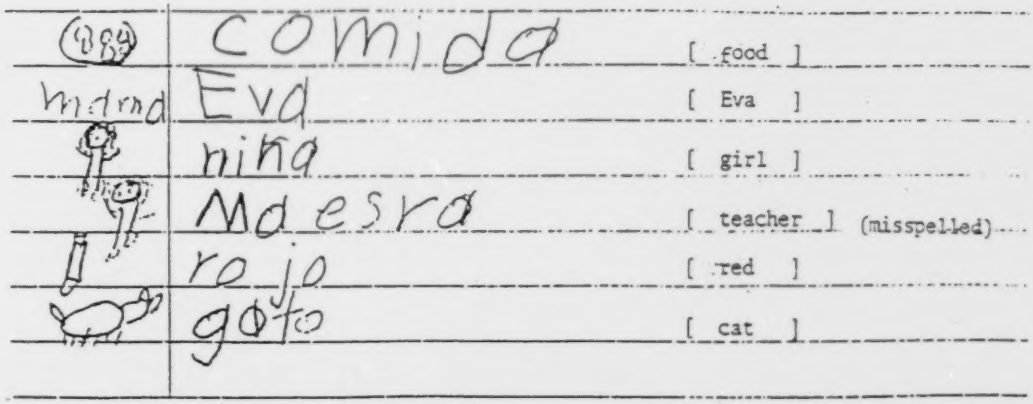
The role played by Sra. Ugarte, the girls' aunt, in this interaction is also typical. She initiates the writing of the vowels in turn 2 and then seems to step back as Felicidad takes over. In turns 14, 22, and 29 she joins Felicidad as she provides the correct names of the vowels to Fidelia who is working to read them.

Excerpt #5

1) FI: //Umumumum.//
2) FU: //( )// Dale ( ) las vocales las escribistes? [Do ( ) the vowels that you wrote?]
3) FI: Sí! ( ) esto sí ( ). Las vocales! Ah! ((laughs)) [Yes! ( ) this ( ). The vowels! Ah!]
4) FI: ((FI writes)) A.
5) ((DV, visiting aunt talk in background, son yells))
6) FG: U. O. OU. A E I O U. (vowel sounds in Spanish)
7) FI: ((writes)) Yo se. [I know.]
8) FG: U. U.
9) FI: Felicidad yo sé! [Felicidad I know!]
10) FG: ( )
11) FI: ((shows paper with AEIOUE to DV)) Las cinco vocales. [The five vowels.]
12) DV: Las cinco vocales. Y cómo se dice? [The five vowels. And how do you say them?]
13) FI: A. I.
14) FU: //E.//
15) FG: //No.// E.
16) FI: I. O. O.
17) ((visiting aunt calls son))

18) FG: No. U. Empieza con la U. [No. U. Begin with the U.]
19) FI: Ese? [That one?]
20) FG: No. Uuu. Empieza con la de u-uva. Empieza con la uva. [No. Uuu. Begin with the one for g-grape. Begin with the grape.]
21) DV: Sí como uva. [Yes like grape.]
22) FU: La U. [The U.]
23) FI: Sí sí. A. A. I. //O.// [Yes yes.]
24) FG: //No// dijistes dos A. Esta es A y esta es A. [No you said two As. This is A and this is A.]
25) FI: Esta es A, ésta es A. [This is A, this is A.]
26) FG: Esta es una E. [This is E.]
27) FI: Ah! Uh-pero un-. Sabe la que está la A. Esa. [Ah! Uh-but a-. You know the one that is the A. That.]
28) FI: A. E. I. O.
29) FU: U.
30) FI: U. E.
31) FG: ((chuckles)) Otra vez la E. [The E again.]
32) DV: Tienes dos E. E. //E// chiquita y E //grande.// Si. [You have two Es. E. E small and E big.]
33) FI: //E.// //Grande.// [E. Big.]
34) FG: Esas son las cinco vocales. [Those are the five vowels.]
35) (young cousin babbles, all laugh))
36) FI: Voy hacer las-más cinco vocales. ((writes)) [I'm going to do the-more five vowels.]

During the interview with Fidelia's aunt and uncle, the researchers asked Felicidad how she helped Fidelia learn how to read. She replied, "Yo primero leo y después Fidelia lee" ["First I read and then Fidelia reads."] then went off by herself and prepared a worksheet to demonstrate her assistance. The sheet, strikingly similar to school worksheets, contains a column with pictures to be used as clues for the words Fidelia was to read. For their aunt's name, the cousin wrote the word "mama," instead of drawing a picture. Felicidad stood next to Fidelia and pointed to the picture and then to the word as she asked Fidelia to read for us. The way in which the information was solicited mimicked typical teacher-student exchanges in school.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Other literacy events were embedded in the girls' play. They took turns with a toy keyboard marked with the letters of the alphabet, each chanting the letters loudly as they pounded the keys. They sometimes burst into song, singing verses learned in school, some of which Felicidad had taught to Fidelia. On several occasions they played school. Fidelia announced "Vamos a jugar a la maestra, ok?" ["Let's play teacher, ok?"]. They assigned roles, gathered up books and pretending to carry lunch boxes too. Fidelia to Felicidad: "Amiguita, cómo estás? Mira, yo te regalé este libro. Te lo regalé. Vamos a compartir. Vamos a almorzar juntas, ok? Mira." ["Little friend how are you? Look, I gave you that book. I gave it to you. Let's share. Let's eat together, ok? Look."] Then Fidelia orders "Vamos a marchar!" ["Let's march!"]. They march, sing, and clean up but do not open the books they are carrying.

In brief, at home, Julializ had access to a range of literacy experts at different levels of literacy ability, including her two brothers and her cousin. She also accessed a variety of material resources, including books, workbooks, paper and pencils, and a computer. Literacy events were organized around homework and skills learned in school as well as in relation to the family's frequent religious experiences at home, in church, and in Sunday School. When co-constructing literacy events, Julializ and her siblings and cousin used strategies singly and in combination, just as they were used in school. They often combined concepts of print, word identification, and comprehension in one event, just as Mrs. Martin did. As noted earlier, there were differences among the three experts in the ways they used and combined the strategies. In all the events, however, all the participating children played active roles in co-constructing the strategies. In school, in contrast, the children tended to be more active only when they were interacting with peers, not with their teacher.

While most literacy events involved direct interaction with written text, there were some salient interactions in which Julializ recited aloud religious texts that she had memorized. Poems, prayers, psalms, and songs—both religious and secular—were blended with school-like talk and topics.

Sra. Torres was a presence in many of the children's interactions. They played primarily in the small public spaces of the family's kitchen and living room where she cooked, watched children, and talked with friends. When the children were involved with literacy she might prompt Julializ, prompt the experts, or model what she believed were more appropriate teaching strategies. Along with her brother, she provided the literacy resources the children used as well as the opportunities to use them.

At home, Fidelia interacted in literacy events with her aunt, uncle, and cousin Felicidad. Resources used included paper and pencils, a few story books and old school books as well as items brought from school by the girls such as homework assignments, previously completed papers, notebooks, and story books on loan. Most of the literacy events co-constructed by Fidelia and Felicidad involved concepts of print, sometimes in combination with oral recitations and writing. As in Julializ's home, both children were active in the construction of these events.

Felicidad, like Julializ's younger brother, often focused her assistance on the correct answer, sometimes saying "no" to reject an incorrect answer and often providing the correct one herself rather than offering cues such as words that included the correct sound. Like the sibling experts in Julializ's homes, Felicidad used elements of teacher-like language.

Sr. and Sra. Ugarte played a less active role in the girls' literacy events than did Julializ's mother. While these girls also played in the home's public spaces, the aunt and uncle were more likely to be at work or talking with relatives and watching television in the living room. Joint activities were less likely than in Julializ's home to involve print. For example, Fidelia explained that she and Felicidad often helped their aunt clean the house when they got home from school. When Sra. Ugarte did become involved, she was more likely to provide some directions for the literacy event and correct responses rather than prompts.

Like Julializ, Fidelia frequently engaged in oral recitations of written texts. Rather than drawing on religious texts, Fidelia used school songs and rhymes.

Concluding Thoughts

In a study of families and literacy, Leichter (1984) describes the difficult task of "locating literacy in the stream of family activities" (p. 42). We had a similar sense, studying literacy in Julializ and Fidelia's homes, as it appeared in a stream of multiple and competing activities, most of which did not serve instructional purposes. Literacy events in which the girls interacted with siblings and others were usually embedded in the flow of the families' lives.

These literacy events were constructed by family members as they accessed and activated a variety of resources. The siblings themselves, their knowledge and experiences, were an integral part of this network of resources. Thus, even when the children held the stage in literacy events, the mothers often stood backstage, prompting the children and providing guidance to both the developing reader and the older sibling. On a broader level, the parents drew on cultural and religious concepts of family interdependence and created an atmosphere in which siblings were obligated to help each other.

While much of the literature on Puerto Ricans presents them as uniformly sharing a culture, we found this notion of little use as we studied the ways these two families had developed of living and making a living on the mainland. In particular, we found that literacy was taught and learned in these two homes in complex ways that were neither entirely distinct nor identical. In both cases, it was necessary to look across the network of resources to understand the full range of literacy events and the strategies constructed by the children with others in their homes.

Religion was a key resource for both families. However, while in both families being "Cristianos" was central to their self-identity, in only one of the homes was religion at the center of their everyday activities and of many literacy events. This had an important impact on the type and frequency of literacy practices. Julializ and her mother read the Bible together every evening and she participated in memorization of the Bible and recitation in church. While Fidelia attended church and Sunday School, her aunt tended to read the Bible to herself, late at night, and literacy was not a collaborative family endeavor.

Many studies of teaching and learning in Latino families (Carger, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994) suggest that literacy events in the homes are almost exclusively organized around the children's homework as well as books and letters brought by the children from school. While this appeared to be the case in Fidelia's home, the emphasis on collaborative Bible study—

characteristics of many evangelical Protestant groups—in Julializ's home introduced a number of frequent and highly meaningful literacy events into the family's routine. These events complemented the literacy learning Julializ experienced in school as well as engaging her in literacy practices less favored in school such as memorization and oral recitation.

Another relevant resource was the knowledge that the adults in the family had of information, services, and people in their neighborhood. The two families differed in their awareness and use of those community supports. Julializ's mother, at home caring for children, had no car but walked Julializ to church and the local library. Julializ's uncle, an important part of the resource network, took her to parks and on other outings. Fidelia's aunt and uncle, while more mobile, worked, often overtime, and made less use of community resources.

The siblings differed in age, literacy competency, language dominance, and in the kind of reading assistance they provided. Julializ interacted in literacy events with both brothers and her cousin and, together, they constructed literacy strategies related to concepts of print, word identification and analysis, and comprehension. These events, in combination with those constructed with her mother and her uncle, provided Julializ with a range of literacy experiences similar to those provided by the teacher in her bilingual kindergarten classroom. Fidelia interacted with her cousin, only one year older and struggling in school. Literacy events constructed with Felicidad and with the girls' aunt and uncle focused on concepts of print, providing an important introduction to literacy but rarely involving letters and words in meaningful contexts. In both homes, memorization and oral recitation of text were salient. In the classroom, the teacher introduced similar activities though they were not emphasized.

Previous research (Farver, 1993; Gregory, 1998; Volk, 1999) indicates that in many cultures, siblings act as skillful mediators of learning for younger children. In contrast, several studies conducted with middle class American children (Azmitia & Hesser, 1993; Ellis & Rogoff, 1986) suggest that children are much less able than adults to work with other children because they tend to focus on finishing the task and getting correct answers, rather than communicating concepts in ways adjusted to the learner's ability. In this regard, the siblings in this study displayed their skills along a continuum. Felicidad, 6 and Francisco, 9, were more likely to provide correct answers and responded "no" to incorrect ones regardless of the other's knowledge or ability. They used strategies that focused on concepts of print and taught using either Spanish or English. Zoila, 6, and Fernando, 12, were more likely to construct multiple strategies with the younger children that scaffolded their reading, in both Spanish and English. They seemed to have more resources at their disposal.

In addition, the mothers differed in their self-perception as competent teachers. Julializ's mother actively taught her daughter, bought books, workbooks, and read the Bible with her and read story books to her. Fidelia's mother initiated fewer literacy events, though she did occasionally prompt the girls when they were interacting with print. Fidelia's uncle was the one who regularly read and translated stories for her.

Our analysis of literacy events in these two homes focused on Julializ and Fidelia's active role in appropriating the resources around them and the complementary and mediating role of siblings in this process. As noted earlier, the concept of appropriation or guided reinvention that

we used in our analysis emphasizes both the active participation of the expert and novice as well as the creation of something new rather than just the replication of the old. In these two homes, beliefs about literacy and literacy strategies were syncretized, actively and creatively blended.

Just as the families did not fit neatly into generalizations or stereotypes of Puerto Rican families, so the literacy constructed in the homes was not identical to that constructed in the classroom or envisioned by the teacher when she articulated her ideas about parent involvement. What counted as literacy at home was a blend of resources activated and created by the families, mixing literacy practices from school, on the U.S. mainland and in Puerto Rico, and from church and related religious experiences with the families' cultural values and immediate needs and motives. Julializ and Fidelia, working with their siblings, constructed literacy events and advanced their own literacy learning in the process.

References

Azmitia, M. & Hesser, J. (1993). Why siblings are important agents of cognitive development: A comparison of siblings and peers. *Child Development, 64*, 430-444.

Baynham, M. (1995). *Literacy practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts*. London: Longman.

Bloome, D. & Theodorou, E. (1988). Analyzing teacher-student and student-student discourse. In J. Green & J. Harker (Eds.), *Multiple perspective analyses of classroom discourse* (pp. 217-248). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Baker, C.D. & Luke, A. (1991). Towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy: An introduction. In C.D. Baker & A. Luke (Eds.), *towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy: Papers of the XII World Congress on Reading* (pp. xi-xxi). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge.

Cairney, T.H. (1998, April). Match, mismatch: Considering the impact of differences in the literacy of home, school and community. Paper presented at the meeting of the AERA, San Diego, CA.

Carger, C.L. (1996). *Of borders and dreams: A Mexican-American experience in urban education*. NY: Teachers College Press.

Cicirelli, V. (1995). *Sibling relationships across the lifespan*. NY: Plenum.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1984). *The making of a reader*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Cook-Gumperz, J. (1986). *The social construction of literacy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

de Acosta, M. (1994). *Reconsidering the role of community in home-school links: Implications for research and practice* (Occasional paper #14). Cleveland, OH: Urban Child Research Center, College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University.

de Acosta, M. & Volk, D. (forthcoming). Literacy Policy and Literacy in the Classroom: What Ethnography Teaches Us. *Studies in Educational Ethnography*, Year 4: 2000 (JAI Press).

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1994). Socializing young children in Mexican-American families: An intergenerational perspective. In P.M. Greenfield & R.R. Cocking (Eds.), *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development* (pp. 55-860 Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Duranti, A. & Ochs, E. (1996). *Syncretic literacy: Multiculturalism is Samoan American*

families. (Research Report #16). Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Ellis, S. & Rogoff, B. (1986). Problem solving in children's management of instruction. In E.C. Mueller & C.R. Cooper (Eds.), *Process and outcome in peer relationships* (pp. 301-325). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Erickson, F. (1991). Forward. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy in a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. vii-x). NY: Teachers College Press.

Farver, J.A.M. (1993). Cultural differences in scaffolding pretend play: A comparison of American and Mexican-American mother-child and sibling-child pairs. In K. MacDonald (Ed.), *parent-child play: Descriptions and implications* (pp. 349-366). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Fischer, K.W. & Bullock, D. (1984). Cognitive development in school-age children: Conclusions and new directions. In W.A. Collins (Ed.), *Development during middle childhood" The years from six to twelve* (pp. 70-146). Wash., DC: National Academy Press.

Gallimore, R. & Goldenber, C. (1993). Activity settings of early literacy: Home and school factors in children's emergent literacy. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick, & C.A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 315-335). NY: Oxford University Press.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L.C., Tenery, M.F., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (1995). Funds of knowledge for teaching in Latino households. *Urban Education, 29*, 443-470.

Gregory, E. (2000). *City literacies: Learning to read across generations and cultures*. London: Routledge.

Gregory, E. (1999). Myths of illiteracy: Childhood memories of reading in London's East End. *Written language and literacy, 2*, 89-111.

Gregory, E. (1998). Siblings as mediators of literacy in linguistic minority communities. *Language and Education, 12*(1), 33-54.

Gregory, E. (1996). *Making sense of a new world: Learning to read in a second language*. London: Paul Chapman.

Hannerz, U. (1980). *Exploring the city: Inquiries into urban anthropology*. NY: Columbia University.

Heap, J.L. (1991). A situated perspective on what counts as reading. In C.B. Baker & A. Luke (Eds.), *Towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy* (pp. 103-139). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words: language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Heath, S.B. (1982). Protean shapes in literacy events: Ever-shifting oral and literate traditions. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Spoken and written language: Exploring orality and literacy (vol. 9, Advances in discourse processes)* (pp. 91-117). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Hiebert, E.H., Pearson, P.D., Taylor, B.M., Richardson, V., and Paris, S.G. 1998. *Every child a reader: Applying reading research in the classroom*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.

Hildago, N.M. (1994). Profile of a Puerto Rican family's support for school achievement. *Equity and Choice, 10*(2), 14-22.

http://little.nlink.netlink/mainframe.htm [March 15, 1999]

Kantor, R., Miller, S.M., & Fernie, D.E. (1992). Diverse paths to literacy in a preschool classroom: A sociocultural perspective. *Reading Research Quarterly, 27*, 185-201.

Leichter, H.J. (1984). Families an environments for literacy. In H. Goelman, A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy* (pp. 38-50). Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.

Luke, A. & Kale, J. (1997). Learning through difference: Cultural practices in early childhood language socialisation [sic]. In E. Gregory (Ed.), *One child, many worlds: Early learning in multicultural communities*. London: David Fulton.

McCollum, P. 1991. Cross-cultural perspectives on classroom discourse and literacy. In E. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies* (pp. 108-121). NY: Teachers College Press.

Reese, L., Balzano, S., Gallimore, R., & Goldenberg, C. (1995). The concept of educación: Latino family values and American schooling. *International Journal of Educational Research, 23*(1), 57-81.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social contexts*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Sanchez-Ayendez, M. (1988). The Puerto Rican family. In H.C. Mindel, R.W. Habenstein, & R. Wright (Eds.), *Ethnic families in America* (3rd ed.) (pp. 173-195). NY: Elsevier.

Santa Barbara Discourse Group (1992). Constructing literacy in classrooms: Literate action as social accomplishment. In H. Marshall (Ed.), *Redefining student learning: Roots of educational change*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Schiefflin, B. & Cochran-Smith, M. (1984). Learning to read culturally: Literacy before schooling. In H. Goelman, A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.). *Awakening to literacy* (pp. 3-23). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Street, B. V. (1999). *Multiple literacies and multi-lingual society*. London: NALDIC Literacy Papers: National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum.

Street, B. V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy development, ethnography, and education*. London: Longman.

Tharp, R. & Gallimore, R. (1988. *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning and schooling in social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Vacca, J.L., Vacca, R.T., and Gove, M.K. 1991. *Reading and learning to read* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper Collins.

Valdes, G. (1996). *Con respeto: Bridging the distance between culturally diverse families and schools*. NY: Teachers College Press.

Volk, D. (1999). "The teaching and the enjoyment and being together...": Sibling teaching in the family of a Puerto Rican kindergartner. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 14*, 5-34.

Volk, D. (1997). Questions in lessons: Activity settings in the homes and school of two Puerto Rican kindergartners. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 28*(1), 22-49.

Wagner, D.A. (1993). *Literacy, culture, and development: Becoming literate in Morrocco*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Wallman, S. (1984). *Eight London households*. London: Tavistock.

Walton, C. (1993). Aboriginal education in Northern Australia: A case study of literacy policies and practices. In Freebody, P.F., & Welch, A.R. (Eds.), *Knowledge, culture and power: International perspectives on literacy as policy and practice* (pp.55-78). London: Falmer.

Watson-Gegeo, K.A. & Gegeo, D.W. (1989). The role of sibling caretaking in socialization. In P.G. Zukow (Ed.), *Sibling interactions across cultures: Theoretical and methodological issues* (pp. 54-76). NY: Springer-Verlag.

28

Weisner, T.S. (1989). Comparing sibling relationships across cultures. In P.G. Zukow (Ed.), *Sibling interactions across cultures: Theoretical and methodological issues* (pp. 59-87). NY: Springer-Verlag.

Weisner, T.S. & Gallimore, R.G. (1977). My brother's keeper: Child and sibling caretaking. *Current anthropology, 18*, 169-190.